the leading journals of the press took up the question of remedy, and suggested, or seemed to suggest, the revival of the old guilds. We put our finger on an article in the *Times* at that period, in which this principle was advocated, and exclaimed to a friend—"There, there, they are coming to the truth at last!" For ten years have we urged and insisted on the necessity of trade incorporation. Trade incorporating would provide the safety-valve against commotion and outbreak, and form the governor of the engine of the commonwealth.

We have thrown off these, our views, somewhat prematurely, it may be thought, but of this time will tell. Meanwhile we shall be happy to see the subject discussed, and rendered into a practicable shape.

We dwell for a moment in this place, to refer to the gratifying instances of support we have experienced and are continuing to experience; our course is decided by it, and we must go on. A good machinery, so to speak, requires to be set in motion; but by the generous aid and indulgence of our friends this will be provided to us, and we shall very shortly be in full working tune. New subscribers come in from all quarters, and our circulation has increased steadily and most agreeably; liberality of an unusual description is exhibited by gentlemen even out of the pale of the profession, who tender us their support, and, unasked, pay their subscriptions; for all this we are truly grateful, as much for ourselves as for the cause we advocate; but the most important feature is our correspondence; and we guessed beforehand that this would be so. Gentlemen of the most active, zealous, and gifted purpose volunteer with us and for us their generous aid in this great question of fomenting and fostering our common art. And very shortly we may calculate upon having in every principal town and district in the country as good as an organised and official branch of this our metropolitan institution, secretaries, honorary it is true as our office mainly is, but most efficient for the purposes of our commission. The value of contributions of information is hard to be estimated; by these we shall be enabled to test the actual condition of a district, and to have such a collection of facts within our reach as will make any other desired step simple and easy. We beg the different societies now so meritoriously working in the great cause of architectural regeneration, to furnish us with reports of their proceedings; we should regret exceedingly not to be able to shew our class what is being done for them by the zealous labours of our amateur friends; too long has the profession slept, the knocking to awaken it comes as it were from without—the response of THE BUILDER, however, is a hearty one, and from within.

THE only discouraging incident we have experienced in the course of our progress, so far as regards the public reception of this Journal, is contained in the letter of a news-agent from Hereford. He is pleased to compliment us on the character of our publication, but at the same time gives it as his opinion, that building affairs are at so low an ebb in that ancient city as to hold out little or no encouragement for a successful sale of THE BUILDER. If this be the case, it is our turn to complain—not of the publisher—nor indeed do we know exactly upon whom to lay the blame, but blame there must be somewhere. Can it be that Hereford, boasting of its fine cathedral, and of having invited the aid of a Cottingham to its restoration, that it can be so far sunk in the scale of building statistics as to deserve that this should be said of it?—there is something wrong, and the benefit of this class of publication will be made evident in turning attention to its rectification. The less the evidence of demand, the more necessary will it be for us to bestir ourselves, and instead of ill being, as the publisher concludes, that there is no call for THE BUILDER in Hereford, we take the very opposite ground; there is an absolute and imperative call for it; it is wanted, to rouse the builders into life and energy; and, acting upon this conviction, we have determined to address ourselves with increased diligence to the task. Our paper *must* and *shall* be pushed in amongst them, and it shall be followed up by other agencies of an exciting quality, to wipe away the reproach from the venerable and interesting city of Hereford.

PATENT IRON MASONS.

WE return to this subject this week, as we promised, and trust to be able to discuss it in a proper and just spirit towards all parties; indeed, we should lament seriously if it were otherwise, and if we had consulted our own sensitiveness on this head, so fearful are we of doing a wrong, we should have abstained from noticing the matter altogether; but this would be a timid, craven policy—dangers, or prognostics of danger, require to be looked boldly in the face, and not shirked or postponed from a dislike of the labour of investigation, or a heedless and an indolent reserve. If a fire threatens, or an inundation gains head, we rouse to activity to suppress them, and do not like the foolish bird who, when pursued, hides its head in the sand, and concludes that it is itself concealed from danger. No: dangers and difficulties are not thus evaded by sensible men; they are faced, and confronted, and overcome.

In what we have now to remark, the bearing will be more upon the employment of machinery in general, than upon this dreaded particular instance, and it will perhaps be seen that we steer a line between the two extremes, the advocates for the unrestricted encouragement of machinery, and those who would almost, if not entirely, prohibit it.

It is an old saying, that "fire and water are good servants, but bad masters." Now, we would almost venture to rest our case as regards the free use of machinery upon this trite and incontrovertible proverb. Machinery is a good servant, but a bad master: bring machinery in to the aid of the workman in matters beyond his reach or powers of accomplishment, to remove an obstacle or combat a difficulty, and you make it the good servant; but if you introduce it to supersede him, without recognizing the necessity of having first given him a means of otherwise providing for himself, then you will make it his master, and a bad and imperious master it is.

This is the sum and substance of our philosophy,—let us be prepared; let there be a demand for the assisting agent, and a provision for its reception, and all will be safe; but until this, an injury will be done, which we could shew by very familiar and homely instances.

To be beforehand is another thing, but it may be as bad or worse than to be behindhand. To "live before one's time," as people commonly phrase it, is as much out of place as to be dragging behind,—to confer gifts upon a person unprepared or unfitted to receive them, is not to benefit but to injure him. How many men—and what is true of men is in a large degree true of communities—how many men have been bewildered and ruined by the accession of a fortune for which their previous habits and life had not prepared them? and we will venture to affirm it of the community in which we live, that much of the mechanical power of which we boast the possession, has come upon us while we were unprovided,—we could name hundreds of instances, but are content with one—and that, the case of the hand-loom weavers. Machinery, we know, must make progress, it is the embodiment of scientific power, and science once set in, is irresistible; but inasmuch as every scientific inventor and calculator considers as to the fitness of the materials he uses,—studies the laws that affect those materials, and the laws of motion; adapts to time, takes the measure of power, and skilfully combines in obedience to them, so the science of social or political economy, call it what you will, requires every fixed principle to be considered, and laws of circumstance to be obeyed; the time of the introduction of a power is as much an element of appropriateness, as that it should be sufficient in power at the time required. If, as we said before, you strike too soon, it is as bad as to strike too late; if you strike too heavily, it is as bad as to strike too lightly. Nay, both the over soon and the over heavy blows are the more to be feared, and will probably be the more injurious; they are acts or effects past and irretrievable, whereas there is a chance of fetching up the later stroke, or by repeating, to make up the lighter one.

The question then is, is this the time to strike that blow, which consists in the introduction of machinery, whose design is to do the work of the mason, or the carpenter? is this the remedy for the already over-stocked market of human labourers? we think not, but we shall be glad to be convinced by any arguments that go directly to the point at issue, and if so convinced, to retrace our steps. If any man can shew us that the 60,000 working masons now employed in Great Britain and Ireland, will not as a body, or partially, suffer, and suffer materially, by the introduction of a machine which does at the cost of one man the work of five—then we are silent; if this cannot be shewn, surely it will be admitted that we have done no more than our duty in thus propounding our opinions, and that we should have done less than our duty, in fact neglected our duty altogether, if we had abstained from so propounding them. We do not need to be told that there would be a large amount of gain to the community in other quarters—for instance, new quarries would probably be opened, an increase of labourers would be employed in working those quarries—stone would be more frequently employed in building, and more wallers to set the stone. Proprietors of rock would have money flow into their hands, as it were, from a new source, an increase might be given to building by reason of the cheapening in respect of masons' work, and in consequence, more carpenters and workmen of other crafts would be employed—house rents might be lower, and so on. But all this gain in other quarters is unlooked for, we had almost said uncalled for. This springing of a new mine of wealth to a certain class, would undoubtedly be an advantage in some sort, but no more a compensation for the deprivation of things in possession to the masons' class, than it would be to make a clear and direct deduction from their wages of five shillings a week, and to hand over those five shillings, to be divided among strangers—the stranger would benefit, we grant, but what would become of the mason?

Prospective fortunes to one party are to be set off against prospective and immediate losses to another. A patentee—no, we will not say a patentee, for patentees seldom get fortunes—but a patentee's patron, is to make or lose a fortune, thousands and tens of thousands of masons are to retain or lose their daily bread and narrow competencies. Which are we to choose between, and which is the ingenious inventor to choose between, his enlarged pecuniary interests, or his patriotism?

Oh! we should have been sorry to have injured him, or the fair expectants of gain who are associated with him, and we unequivocally acquit them of any desire or thought to injure the working man and the master mason, or the interests dependent upon them. Sooner would we put our hands into our purse and call upon our countrymen to do the same, to reimburse the inventor and his colleagues. Although this would be putting the matter on a pure footing of money grasping, yet sooner would we do and recommend this, than that any great head should be made in this threatened inroad, on the comforts of so many thousands. Let us hope, however, that this serious awakening to thought may have the effects we desiderate; but, above all, that if there are to be any losers, the number may be the smaller, and those only the losers of what they never had, a sort of negative loss—rather than a very large number of absolute losers, of present moderate means and comforts.

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